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Faculty Senate Chronicle for December 3, 2009

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SENATE ACTIONS

- **Passed a motion from APC changing graduation with honors requirements. 6**
- **Passed a motion allowing the EC to act on behalf of the Senate until February 2010 8**
- **Passed a resolution congratulating and supporting the men's soccer team 8**

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Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting of December 3, 2009

The regular meeting of the Faculty Senate took place Thursday, December 3, 2009 in Room 201 of the Buckingham Center for Continuing Education (BCCE). Senate Chair Harvey Sterns called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

Of the current roster of sixty-two Senators, 45 were present for this meeting. Senators Barrett, Cheh, Clark, Concannon, Friberg, Hamed, McDonald, Marich and Sancaktar were absent with notice. Senators Arter, Carson, Rearick, Ritchey, Schantz, Steiger, Xiao and Yi were absent without notice.

I. Approval of the Minutes – Chair Sterns called the meeting to order. He then explained that since the November Chronicle had not yet been distributed, we would not be considering the minutes of our last meeting.

Senator Gerlach pointed out an error from the October Chronicle. Our late colleague Mr. Ronald B. Snider's name had been misspelled.

II. Chairman's Remarks and Special Announcements - Chair Sterns reported the unfortunate passing of two colleagues.

Peggy J. Shallenberger, an administrative assistant to the faculty at The University of Akron Wayne College, died Thursday, Nov. 26, at the age of 58, following a long illness. She had worked at Wayne College for more than 35 years.

Dr. James Lindsay White, the Harold A. Morton Professor of Polymer Engineering, passed away Nov. 26 in Germany. He was 71.

Professor White founded two polymer engineering programs: the first at the University of Tennessee and the second here at the University of Akron. He also founded the International Polymer Processing Society. As a leader in his field, he founded two journals: The Journal of Polymer Engineering and The International Polymer Processing Journal.

Chair Sterns then asked the members of the senate to rise and have a moment of silence in memory of these departed colleagues. (Senate observed a moment of silence)

Chair Sterns then commented on several issues. The first was to thank the Executive Committee for all of their and guidance and support and to thank the members of the senate for their participation in service to the university. He went on to express disappointment that all the constituent groups have not yet approved the University Council proposal.

The issue he put forward as the most important was how the faculty and administration work together in both short term and long term planning.

Chair Sterns stated “We have to keep in mind that if we believe in faculty governance and we believe in the role of a faculty senate, that it is absolutely essential that we have our voice in decision making in all levels of the university. ‘Voice’ only means participatory discussion. We understand that our work is only a recommendation. One of the things that we’ve experienced in the UCEC is that when we get to specific points of how things work, certain values emerge in the discussion. I also am concerned that we maintain a civil working relationship between the administration and the faculty. I know that that can be difficult, especially when we’re in certain time periods; but I still believe in that as a principle. Another thing that emerged from recent discussions was a focus on the role of *service*. I have spoken to this once before earlier in the semester. *Service* to the university at the departmental level, at the college level and here at the university wide level should be valued. The reason that I’m mentioning it is that in one of the University Council Exploratory Committee meetings there were discussions regarding *service*. We have to be very careful here about how we treat *service* in what we do. *Service* to the university is a core value and it’s one that we should not take lightly. I hope that as we finish up the UC that *service* will not be a major problem that prevents people from participating in this governance structure or a new governance structure.”

Chair Sterns next recognized Mr. Gary Conley (dressed as Santa) for many years of service to the Faculty Senate. The citation prepared for Mr. Conley read as follows,

“The Faculty Senate of The University of Akron expresses its good wishes to Gary R. Conley on the occasion of his retirement from the University of Akron. The Senate thanks Gary for his years of service in his role as Coordinator of the Public Address System and his many years of recording the meetings of this body. We wish Gary good luck and every happiness in his retirement. Presented on this day Thursday, December 3, 2009”

The senate also expressed appreciation with applause.

Mr. Conley then introduced Mr. Ted Lear, who will be taking over his responsibilities.

III. Reports –

a. Executive Committee - Secretary Huff reported that the Executive Committee had two meetings in the month of November. On November 19th the committee met with President and the Provost. The agenda at that meeting included the discussion of the Provost search, the status of the University Council proposal, student code of conduct policy and the background check policy among other things. On November 24th the committee met to prepare for the December meeting of the senate and to discuss other issues before the university. In order to move forward with the ad hoc Committee on Reorganization the EC sent out a call for volunteers and nominations. The EC also discussed the role of two-year colleges in Ohio and especially the activities of the Wayne campus, Medina county unit and Summit College. One of the issues discussed was the equivalency of classes taught in different locations under the same numbers. The Secretary also apologized for not having the November Chronicle out in time for the December meeting.

b. Remarks from the President - Chair Sterns noted that President Proenza was in Washington and then invited Dr. Baker to present the Provost's Remarks.

c. Remarks from the Provost - "Thank you Dr. Sterns. I have a few reports. On Monday we celebrated our newly tenured and promoted faculty as well as our distinguished professors, Andrew Borowiec, Miko Cakmak, Walter Hixon and Wiley Youngs. It was a very nice ceremony. I know a number of you were there to appreciate and recognize the good work of all our colleagues. Yesterday, I also had the opportunity to attend the math poster session in the atrium of the Arts and Sciences building. This was a tremendous event. It was a capacity crowd and as always I was humbled by the work of our students and the efforts that our faculty make to work with them.

Work is ongoing at the Student Success and Retention Committee as we try to prepare for the new University System of Ohio metrics related to graduation and retention. No need to tell you that graduation rates nationally have moved very little over the last four decades. Much has been written about the correlation between retention and the degree by which a student feels engaged or connected to campus, faculty members, fellow students and scholars. I appreciate the efforts of the Student Success and Retention Committee in working with all of us to achieve greater student engagement. There are a number of wonderful examples of that on campus. Faculty members are encouraging greater participation in the intellectual and cultural life of our campus by including such activities as China Week and Rethinking Race into course work and curriculum. Increasing numbers of undergraduates are participating in research activities with faculty members evidenced by the numbers at last year's conference on graduate and undergraduate research. At the same time we're working to improve retention by establishing various supports to help students succeed. For example, we are working on improving academic advising. Many of you participated in the NACATA advising audit. That report has been completed. Dr. Charlie Nutt of the review team will be coming to campus on Wednesday, December 9th, to give a workshop on advising and to discuss implications from the audit and results. Nancy Roadruck, of the Faculty Senate, I'm sure would be happy to provide information not only on the audit but also about the visit of Dr. Nutt next week. Because of these efforts and others, we've seen improvement in the retention of first year students. That is the group that is most susceptible to withdrawing from the university. Many members of the Student Success and Retention Committee are meeting with all of you in colleges, schools and departments to learn about what you are doing to enhance student engagement and increase involvement in engagement activities. I would like to express my appreciation in advance for those efforts. Finally, on that note, we have been asked to provide the Chancellor with a report on our progress on last year's metrics. Institutional research is gathering that data and we will have a report available to you in January.

A couple of social reminders; everyone is invited to the campus wide Holiday Social event, December 17th from 4 to 6:00 in the Student Union atrium. Also make a note that the Myers School of Art is holding their annual holiday sale, beginning today and following through tomorrow ending at 10pm. A live music performance will include members of UA faculty and students. The holiday sale as many of you know features items, art work done by school of art students and alumni and it's a great way to support our students and get some holiday shopping done at the same time.

On another note, due to some very high demand, accommodations for additional seating has been added to the tournament match this weekend between the University of Akron men's soccer team and Tulsa. As

you know, The University of Akron is now 22 and 0. The team is working their way towards a national championship. Finally, I'd like to add that I know this is the end of the semester and those piles of exams and term papers await you in your offices. I want to express my appreciation in advance for the work that you do to promote the university and student success. I thank you as well for your patience and support during my transition into the role of Interim Provost. I know that these are challenging and difficult times but please know that I'm very committed to our success and I look forward to returning in the new year to work with you further on continuing in that success. My best wishes for a peaceful and satisfying holiday season. Thank you."

d. Committee Reports -

Academic Policies Committee (appendices A & B)

Committee Chair and Associate Provost Rex Ramsier reported that the committee had considered the issue of student GPA rounding for the purpose of determining graduation with honors. On behalf of the committee he made the following motion:

The grade point average will be rounded to the nearest hundredth for the purpose of determining graduation with honors.

Associate Provost Ramsier explained that this would be a change from the current practice of not rounding and would bring the university in line with the practice of the law school. He also explained that the distinction of graduating with honors at commencement is based on the GPA from the previous semester. Graduation with honors on the actual diploma is based on the final GPA.

Chair Sterns pointed out that the final GPA would still be recorded in thousandths for transcripts.

Chair Sterns called for a vote. **The proposal passed without objection.**

Curriculum Review Committee (no report)

Chair Sterns made several comments about curriculum review in reference to the discussions and vote taken in the November meeting. At that meeting Associate Provost Ramsier had brought forward two proposals from the committee to allow CRC to continue the review process as it has been done recently even though it was contrary to Board rules. The proposal was defeated. As a result of this, the Executive Committee will now review all curriculum proposals. At this time the EC has approximately 50 proposals to consider. If the EC finds problems with any of these proposals, they will go to the CRC.

Chair Sterns stated that it is our goal to propose rule changes to clarify the process and eliminate the confusion surrounding this issue. He has asked the Curriculum Review Committee to meet with the Curriculum Software Review Committee so that a comprehensive and coordinated solution can be developed. He also emphasized that these issues should be addressed as soon as possible.

University Council Exploratory Committee

Associate Provost Ramsier reported the committee is considering the input from two of the constituency groups that did not ratify the bylaws document. The Associated Student Government has an issue with the number of representatives that they would have on the council. The Vice Presidents provided the committee with a one and half page written response that had about six points. The committee has reviewed half

of those. One issue was about the concept of *service* and how it gets counted. Another main issue is about the UC structure. The bylaws document provides for a set of standing committees and then a set of oversight committees. The concept is that there would be representatives at the table when decisions are made in the oversight committees. This is intended to improve communications between people from all constituency groups including the administration. That structure is what is being discussed. It is a substantive question that the committee needs to consider before making any proposals.

Senator Gerlach commented that the Faculty Senate had been advised not to try making any changes in the number of representatives to the University Council bylaws at the time the document was voted on and approved. He suggested that if concessions are made to satisfy the students for more representatives than they have been currently assigned according to the bylaws, that the Senate must insist on a review of our number of representatives as well.

Senator Lillie spoke in support of Senator Gerlach's comments. He went on to emphasize that the UCEC spent a great deal of time and effort in a cooperative and collaborative process that required concession by all in order to arrive at the document that we have now. If accommodations are made to the concerns of the two bodies that have failed to approve the bylaws, then he believes that does open up the process to other issues. This would require a re-ratification of whatever the final document might be.

He continued saying that this is a very serious issue with implications for the role of the Senate. As the past co-chair of the UCEC Senator Lillie reminded the body that extensive and intensive discussions about the various roles of the various constituencies had taken place in the development of the bylaws and it would be wrong to leave with the impression that the issues being discussed now are things that we have not discussed at length. To make changes would be a reversal in what the committee had decided to do and what six of the constituent groups have approved.

Chair Sterns addressed Senator Ziegler expressing the importance of the deliberations of the student government to the approval process. He also emphasized the compromises that had been made by all of the constituent groups concerning representation. These compromises were made for the greater good of the University Council proposal. He also repeated that student representation consisted of both undergraduate and graduate students (two from each group). He asked Senator Ziegler to communicate these issues to the ASG.

Student Judicial Policy Committee

Senator Bove reported that the proposal approved by the senate at the November meeting would go first to the Board of Trustees Rules Committee and then to the full Board of Trustees for approval. He will report back to the senate on the final outcome concerning the burden of proof issue. The committee will then work with the Athletic Committee to bring the student code of conduct regarding athletics in alignment with the Board rule.

Senator Rich added that he and Vice President Fey have agreed that he will accompany the vice president to the rules committee meeting. Senator Rich will have an opportunity to advocate the Senate's position on that issue as well as to help Vice President Fey explain other details of the code of student conduct since they worked together on it. The Rules Committee will make a decision not only on the code as a whole but specifically on the issue of the burden of proof. Whatever they decide will be reported to the Board as a whole. Senator Rich hopes to be able to report further at the February meeting.

Curriculum Software Review Committee

Chair Sterns reported as chair of the committee. He stated that progress in the review process has allowed the work schedule to be revised. Vice President Sage and the provost have supported this. A budget allocation has been made but not yet approved by the Board of Trustees.

He again emphasized the important opportunity we have to revise the curriculum approval process.

IV. New Business

Senator Lillie made the following motion:

That this body empower the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate to take any actions that are necessary between now and the February 3rd meeting and to report those actions back at that meeting for ratification.

Senator Lazar asked if the senate could hear some elaboration on what issues might be involved and what decisions might be made by the Executive Committee.

Senator Lillie responded that the intent was to provide for any unforeseen situations that called for the Senate to respond to an issue between now and February. He stated that the motion was put forward due to the length of time before the next meeting and that he did not have any particular action in mind.

Chair Sterns added that this approach is fairly routine and that one of the advantages of having the list serve is to have the ability to contact the members of the senate if an issue required the full senate's input. With no further comments or questions being asked the vote was taken.

The motion passed without opposition.

Senator Elliott made the following motion:

Whereas the 2009 University of Akron soccer team

- has been undefeated while reaching the elite eight as of this date,**
- does not always receive the recognition it deserves,**
- reflects favorably on the diligence and sportsmanship expected of student athletes,**
- has a very good chance to win the 2009 national championship;**

Therefore, be it resolved that The University of Akron Faculty Senate applauds the efforts of the team and coach and offers all its best hopes and encouragement in the team's endeavor to win the national championship.

The motion passed without opposition.

V. Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 3:56 pm

Verbatim transcript prepared by Heather Loughney

Transcript edited by Robert Huff,
Secretary of the Senate

APPENDICES TO MINUTES

FACULTY SENATE MEETING OF DECEMBER 3, 2009

APPENDIX A

November 20, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty Senate

FROM: Academic Policies Committee

RE: Academic Policies Committee Approval Recommendations

The Academic Policies Committee recommends the calculation of rounding of the GPA to the nearest hundredth for graduation with honors.

(A) Graduation with honors.

- (1) For a student who is being awarded a baccalaureate degree and who has completed sixty-four or more credits at the university of Akron, the degree

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| will be designated | if the overall grade-point average is |
| cum laude | between 3.40 and 3.59 |
| magna cum laude | between 3.60 and 3.79 |
| summa cum laude | 3.80 or higher |

The grade-point average will be rounded to the nearest hundredth for the purpose of determining graduation with honors.

The number of credit hours to determine graduation with honors for the commencement ceremony includes the total number of credits hours completed at the university of Akron plus the number of credits hours in progress at the university of Akron.

A student who holds a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution, including the university of Akron, and who earns a subsequent baccalaureate degree at the university of Akron per the academic policy requirements for second degrees, is eligible to graduate with honors.

- (2) For a student who is being awarded an associate degree and who has completed thirty-two or more credits at the university, the degree

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| will be designated | if the overall grade-point average is |
| with distinction | between 3.40 and 3.59 |
| with high distinction | between 3.60 and 3.79 |
| with highest distinction | 3.80 or higher |

The grade-point average will be rounded to the nearest hundredth for the purpose of determining graduation with honors.

A student who holds an associate degree from an accredited institution, including the university of Akron, and who earns a subsequent associate degree at the university of Akron per the academic policy requirements for second degrees, is eligible to graduate with honors.

APPENDIX B

**THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON
RESOLUTION 12/03/09**

Pertaining to the Approval of the Following Recommendations from the Academic Policies
Committee

BE IT RESOLVED, that the recommendation presented by the Academic Policies Committee on November 17, 2009, concerning approval of the calculation of rounding of the GPA to the nearest hundredth for graduation with honors be approved.

3359-60-03.6 Graduation.

(A) Graduation with honors.

- (1) For a student who is being awarded a baccalaureate degree and who has completed sixty-four or more credits at the university of Akron, the degree

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